

Message Text

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SUBJECT: GOB ACTIONS IN LAW ENFORCEMENT AND COCA CROP
DIVERSIFICATION

1. DURING THE PAST TWO WEEKS THE BOLIVIAN NARCOTICS BUREAU, DNSP, HAS ARRESTED 31 BOLIVIANS AND FOUR COLOMBIANS ON NARCOTICS CHARGES. DNSP HAS SEIZED ELEVEN KILOS OF COCAINE AND ONE KILO OF MARIHUANA. IN ADDITION, THREE WEAPONS AND ONE VEHICLE WERE SEIZED FROM ALLEGED TRAFFICKERS. COLONAL APARICIO, DIRECTOR OF DNSP, HAS ANNOUNCED THAT NARCOTICS TRAFFICKERS ARE SEEKING TO SELL DRUGS TO BOLIVIAN SCHOOL CHILDREN AND A CRACKDOWN ON THESE ELEMENTS IS UNDER WAY.

2. ON APRIL 25 IN THE CHAPARE AND ON APRIL 27 IN LA PAZ, SENIOR BOLIVIAN AUTHORITIES HELD LARGE MEETINGS WITH CAMPESINOS AND CAMPESINO LEADERS TO DESCRIBE GOB STEPS TOWARD DIVERSIFICATION AWAY FROM COCA PRODUCTION. THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE WAS THE PRINCIPAL SPEAKER AT BOTH RALLIES AND SOUGHT TO PRESENT A BALANCED VIEW OF OFFICIAL BOLIVIAN EFFORTS GRADUALLY TO SHIFT AGRICULTURE AWAY FROM COCA LEAF. COLONEL APARACIO ALSO SPOKE AT BOTH RALLIES. THE OFFICIALS DESCRIBED THE NEWLY CREATED ENTITY WHICH WILL BE IN CHARGE
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OF THE DIVERSIFICATION EFFORTS IN CHAPARE AND YUNGAS. IN THAT CONNECTION, A SUPREME DECREE HAS BEEN ISSUED, ACCORDING TO THE PRESS, BRINGING INTO BEING THIS AGRICULTURAL ORGANIZATION WHICH IS AUTONOMOUS FROM THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND PARALLEL WITH DNSP. THE DIRECTOR OF THE NEW ENTITY IS WINSTON ESTREMADOIRO, A HIGHLY QUALIFIED AGRICULTURE ECONOMIST AND GRADUATE OF AN AMERICAN UNIVERSITY.

OBSERVERS AT THE TWO RALLIES REPORT THAT THERE IS MISUNDERSTANDING, SUSPICION, AND SOME RESISTANCE TO THE GOB'S PUBLICLY ANNOUNCED DIVERSIFICATION EFFORT. THE MINISTER AND COLONEL APARACIO ANNOUNED THAT A REGISTRY OF PRODUCERS AND THEIR FARMS WILL GET UNDER WAY PROMPTLY. THIS ACTION, THE CAMPESINOS SUSPECT, WILL LEAD TO FORCED REDUCTION OF THEIR COCA PRODUCTION AND POSSIBLE LOSS OF INCOME.

3. COMMENT: ACTIONS BY THE GOB IN RECENT DAYS SUGGEST CLEARLY THAT THE COMMITMENT TO EXPAND LAW ENFORCEMENT AND CROP DIVERSIFICATION IS BEING CARRIED OUT. THE GOB DEVELOPED THE RALLIES OF THE CAMPESINOS ON ITS OWN INITIATIVE AND IS CONFRONTING THE POLITICAL RISKS OF ITS RELATIONS WITH FARMERS IN THE COA-PRODUCING AREAS WITH EVIDENT VIGOR. UNDERLYING THE GOB EFFORTS IS US FINANCIAL AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE. WHILE THE BOLIVIANS KNOW THAT THE AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES ARE NOW CHARACTERIZED AS PILOT PROJECTS AND MUST SHOW POSITIVE RESULTS, THEY ARE NONETHELESS STIMULATED TO MOVE BY THE ASSURANCE OF THE CLEAR US COMMITMENT TO CONTINUE TO COOPERATE WITH THEM IN BOTH LAW ENFORCEMENT AND AGRICULTURAL DIVERSIFICATION EFFORTS. THE PROSPECTS OF EVENTUALLY TAPPING THE POTENTIAL FUNDING OF \$45 MILLION OF AID CONCESSIONAL LOAN FUNDS FOR AGRICULTURAL ASSISTANCE TO POOR FARMERS IN THE COCA-GROWING AREAS IS A KEY FEATURE IN MOTIVATING THE GOB TO KEEP UP ITS EFFORTS AND EXPAND THEM AGAINST TRAFFICKING AND COCA PRODUCTION. STEDMAN

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